From: Gilles
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/16/02 8:26pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I can not help but be offended by the settlement in the case of Anti Trust vs Microsoft. The proposed settlement does absolutely nothing to help third party developers. First of all, let us remember that third party developers have managed to write software without the help of Microsoft for long before the anti-trust case.

Second of all, the problem that seems to be clear to the hundreds of individual creative programmers I deal with everyday, is that Microsoft has the engineering task force to look at an innovative product, duplicate it in a record time (so far no harm done), and use their marketing power but most of all, illegal (often verbal) binding agreements to dislocate the competitors product by offering their alternate solution in ways that are more than questionable.

Going back to the beginning of Windows, we find their very first illegal monopoly offense against Disk Operating System's competitor Digital Research with DR-DOS. Microsoft would force OEMs to buy their inferior MS-DOS with the argument that the OEM would have to pay more for MS-Windows alone that they would if they distributed MS-Windows bundled with MS-DOS. Then they took on Networking companies like Novell by offering Networking services such as those found in Windows for Workgroups and Windows NT. This same monopolistic approach has been clearly seen as a pattern since then in cases like their Disk Compression technology, Windows Media Player (competing with Real Networks and lots of others), Netscape Navigator (probably the most evident case of monopolistic action) and many others.

What saddens me the most, is to realize that most of today's websites can not be viewed properly unless they are visited with Microsoft's Internet Explorer. The World's Wide Web which started as an open project to allow anybody from any machine, anywhere in the world to view anybody else's web site, has now become a Microsoft only world. By offering tools - first for free - that allowed anybody to create professional websites quickly (tools that use Microsoft proprietary extensions), Web sites that can now ONLY run on Microsoft servers and be viewed best only with Microsoft Internet Explorer have flourished at a rate so exponential that it is becoming more and more difficult to enjoy browsing the web unless one is using Microsoft tools.

As an avid defendant of a free world wide web, overseen by an open group dedicated to keep it free from vendor specific extensions, I am saddened to realize just how much Microsoft managed to turn the web into a Microsoft only monopoly.

I urge you to please reconsider the settlement offering. Forcing Microsoft to be more friendly with their competitors will not prevent them from going after these same markets. Is it necessary to remind ourselves that everything Microsoft has to offer today (including Windows itself) did exist before they made it, from the mind of some other creative individuals? I Could go into details and show you where, everything they make today, comes from and how they managed to turn all great computer inventions into a Microsoft only platform.

I personally believe that microsoft should be broken down into an OS only company and that applications such as Windows Media Player and Internet Explorer (or Netscape) should be add ons. To let them make us believe that an Operating system without these is not a complete operating system is wrong. Many people were browsing and enjoying the web in full multi-media contents and 3D Before Microsoft claimed it to be impossible unless MSIE was part of Windows.

If we allow Microsoft to go on, we will soon witness the results of the long efforts that lead to VRML (by companies such as SGI and Pixar, allowing the web to be browsed in as a virtual 3 Dimensional World) become part of MS IE turning 3D websites into another of Microsoft's only experience.

Please don't let Microsoft become the controlling force of the computer oriented world we live in.

Sincerely,
Gilles Gameiro
--